

Message Text

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11
ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 A-01 SY-05 OPR-02 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IGA-01 SIL-01 /071 W
----- 013632

P R 110945Z JUL 75
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4740
CSAF WASHDC/LG
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMCONSUL UDORN
DEPCHMACTHAI UDORN
13TH AF CC CLARK AFB
CINCPAC
13TH ADVON CC UDORN
CINCPACAF HICKAM AFB HI/LGP
PACAF PROCUREMENT CEN THAI BKK TH/LGP
SECDEF WASHDC/DSAA
DIA WASHDC/AH-3
11 AFCMC UDORN RTAFB TH

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: AMER, PFOR, US, LA
SUBJ: RAL EMPLOYEES' DEMANDS

1. PROBLEM HAS NOT GONE AWAY. EVENING OF JULY 9 PANYA,
ACCOMPANIED BY EIGHT RAL, USAID EMPLOYEES AND STUDENTS,
CAME TO EMBASSY AND MET WITH CHARGE, CAPT. LORANGER
(ADAO) AND FSIO DAKS. IT LASTED NEARLY TWO HOURS AND
WAS TENSE. PANYA SAID THERE WERE THREE PROBLEMS: 1)
PAYMENT FOR WORK DONE BEYOND 78,000 HOURS; 2) INVENTORY
OF EQUIPMENT TO BE TURNED OVER, AND 3) SEVERANCE PAYMENTS
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COMPARABLE TO THOSE GRANTED TAPS, OB AND USAID EMPLOYEES.

2. CHARGE MADE BASIC POINT THAT THERE WAS NO ONE LEFT IN AMERICAN MISSION TO DEAL WITH AID MATTERS AND THAT THESE HAD TO BE FORWARDED TO BANGKOK OR WASHINGTON. HE HAD NO AUTHORITY TO NEGOTIATE. THE LETTER PANYA HAD SENT ON JULY 7 HAD BEEN SENT TO DAO CONTRACT OFFICER

IN BANGKOK AND AN ANSWER WOULD BE FORTHCOMING. REGARDING SEVERANCE PAY, CHARGE TOOK FIRM LINE THAT WE WOULD FULFILL OUR OBLIGATIONS ACCORDING TO THE CONTRACTS AND PAY SEVERANCE PAY ACCORDING TO LAO LABOR LAWS AS PROVIDED FOR IN THE CONTRACTS. WE COULD NOT PAY IN EXCESS OF WHAT WAS REQUIRED. THERE WAS ALSO ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RAL, WHICH WAS NATIONAL COMPANY AND REMAINED IN BEING, AND THE OTHER ENTITIES -- TAPS, OB AND USAID -- WHICH HAD BEEN TERMINATED.

3. THIS SET OFF RAMBLING DISCUSSION. WHAT PROTESTORS WANTED WAS IMMEDIATE ACCEPTANCE OF THEIR DEMANDS. PANYA POINTED OUT TO THEM THAT HIS PROBLEM WAS THAT RAL HAD NO MONEY AND COULD NOT MEET THEIR DEMANDS UNLESS AMERICANS UNDERTOOK TO COVER THEM. EVERYONE LEFT DISSATISFIED AND THERE WAS UNDERLYING SENSE OF ANGER.

4. CHARGE, ACCOMPANIED BY DAKS, TRACKED DOWN MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS SINGKAPO MORNING JULY 10. (WE HAD BEEN SEEKING APPOINTMENT SINCE JULY 7). HE WAS WITH HIS NEW SECSTATE SOMPHAVAN INTHAVONG, WHO STRUCK US AS UNUSUALLY INTELLIGENT. CHARGE WENT OVER MEETING PREVIOUS EVENING, AND RECALLED THAT IN THEIR LAST CONVERSATION MINISTER HAD INDICATED NO SEVERANCE PAY WAS CALLED FOR SINCE EMPLOYEES WOULD REMAIN WITH RAL. SINGKAPO ACKNOWLEDGED THIS AND SAID HE HAD TOLD THIS TO EMPLOYEES, BUT THEY WERE NOT INTERESTED IN WORKING AT GOVERNMENT SALARIES, WHICH WERE INFERIOR TO THOSE RECEIVED WHILE WORKING UNDER USAID, AND PREFERRED TO LEAVE. CHARGE EMPHASIZED THAT OUR CONTRACTS WERE WITH RAL, WHICH CAME UNDER OVERALL SUPERVISION OF MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS; EMPLOYEES WERE NOT OURS. FINALLY, CHARGE REAFFIRMED THAT WE WOULD LIVE UP TO OUR CONTRACTS AND PROPOSED THAT RAL GIVE US A LIST LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CERTIFYING EMPLOYEES TO BE SEPARATED AND A STATEMENT FROM MINISTRY OF LABOR CERTIFYING THAT AMOUNT OF SEPARATION PAYMENTS WAS IN CONFORMITY WITH LAO LAW. THESE WE WOULD SUBMIT TO WASHINGTON. THIS SEEMED SATISFACTORY TO SINGKAPO WHO SAID HE WOULD GET IN TOUCH WITH PANYA.

5. LATE AFTERNOON CHARGE REACHED PANYA TO TELL HIM OF CONVERSATION. PANYA HAD SEEN SINGKAPO AT NOON, AND MIN-

ISTER HAD TOLD HIM TO DRAW UP LIST TO FORWARD TO CHARGE THROUGH HIMSELF. BILLS WOULD ALSO HAVE TO BE PASSED THROUGH MINISTER. PANYA HAD ALSO BEEN TO MINISTRY OF LABOR, HE SAID, WHERE HE HAD BEEN TOLD THAT LAO LABOR LAW PROVIDED FOR MINIMUM BUT NOT MAXIMUM SEPARATION PAYMENTS. (WE SHALL CHECK POINT.) IN A GENERALLY UNPLEASANT CONVERSATION, PANYA AFFIRMED THAT HE HAD TRIED TO PERSUADE EMPLOYEES TO CONTINUE WORKING, BUT THEY WERE NOT INTERESTED. THEY WANTED SEPARATION PAY AT THE USAID EMPLOYEE LEVEL.

6. COMMENT: WE MUST NOW WAIT FOR THE NEW LETTER WHICH HAS BEEN PROMISED. WE HAVE NO ILLUSIONS REGARDING WHAT WE SHALL RECEIVE. WE EXPECT CERTIFICATION OF MOST EMPLOYEES -- IF NOT ALL -- AND MIN. OF LABOR CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE WITH LAW EVEN IF SEPARATION PAYMENT IS WELL BEYOND NORMS. WE SHALL CONTINUE TO STRUGGLE TO SETTLE THIS ONE WITHOUT A MAJOR FLARE-UP. HOWEVER, DEPARTMENT BETTER START DISCUSSIONS WITH AID AND DOD TO DECIDE HOW FAR WE ARE PREPARED TO GO IN RESISTING EXCESSIVE DEMANDS THAT ARE NEVERTHELESS CERTIFIED BY PROPER AUTHORITIES AS CORRECT AND THEREFORE FALLING WITHIN SCOPE OF CONTRACTS.
CHAPMAN

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